

new business formation and the entrepreneurial environment in States.

I am proud that Kansas City leaders recognize the importance of policies that support entrepreneurs. Last year, area leaders declared that Kansas City should be called "America's Most Entrepreneurial City," given their efforts to encourage entrepreneurship.

Better policies at the State and local level will create more opportunities for entrepreneurs to open businesses and put Americans to work.

Finally, the Startup Act will help win the global battle for talent by keeping entrepreneurial-minded and highly skilled workers in the United States.

For too long, our Nation's immigration policies have turned away American-educated talent and sent highly-skilled individuals back to their home country where they competed against America. Rather than lose that talent, we need to keep those highly-skilled individuals and potential job creators in the United States.

The Startup Act recognizes the job-creating potential of entrepreneurial and highly-skilled immigrants, and provides additional opportunities for those who are here legally on a temporary basis to stay if they have the high-tech skills our economy needs or are willing and able to create jobs for Americans.

Highly-skilled workers will fuel growth at technology startups and entrepreneurial immigrants will employ Americans.

Business and industry leaders across the country are speaking out about the importance of innovation and entrepreneurship. Gary Shapiro, the President and CEO of the Consumer Electronics Association, said this:

As a country we must do more to support and foster innovation and entrepreneurialism, and the introduction of the Startup Act is an important step forward.

Dr. Robert Atkinson, the President and Founder of the Information Technology & Innovation Foundation echoed those remarks. He said:

The United States is at risk of losing its economic leadership and vitality and it is essential for policymakers to unite in practical ways to reverse this trend. The Startup Act is a commendable example of what is needed to restore U.S. innovation-based competitiveness.

The millions of Americans who spoke out last week against a bill that would stifle innovation on the Internet understand the importance of this too.

Fostering innovation and promoting entrepreneurship are not Republican or Democrat ideas they are American values.

What occurred last week is a reminder to all of us in this Senate about the leadership that is necessary. Again, I congratulate Senator WYDEN for providing that leadership. With good leaders in Washington, DC, and with the American people who understand in many instances better than we often do the value of entrepreneurship, of free

speech and an open Internet, great things can once again happen in the United States of America. Our economy can flourish and grow.

It is so important that what occurred this week, with the legislation not proceeding, sets the stage for greater opportunities for Americans across our country to have a dream, to pursue it, to succeed, to spend their time pursuing that dream, and in achieving their dreams they have the opportunity to create success for others.

I urge my colleagues to work with me. Let us work together. Our country cannot wait until after another election to get the economy growing again.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

SENATOR MARK KIRK

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I join my colleague from Illinois in expressing our concerns about the junior Senator from Illinois, Senator KIRK, who, unfortunately, suffered a medical incident, has had surgery, and is now recovering in Chicago. We know once again we are reminded that life is short and it is fragile. It could happen to any one of us or our families or anyone we care about and love. I know all of us extend our sympathy and our well wishes to Senator KIRK as he begins his convalescence and recovery from this surgery and this medical incident that he has experienced.

THE BUDGET

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I wish to observe that tomorrow night the President of the United States will make his annual State of the Union Address to Congress. This signals, of course, the beginning of the annual budget and appropriations process. But what has not happened for too long is the Senate passing a budget for the Federal Government. In fact, tomorrow, the same day the President will speak to the Nation, it will be the 1,000th day since the budget was passed by the Senate. That day was April 29, 2009. As the facts would reveal, it is our Democratic friends, led by the majority leader, Senator REID, who have resisted bringing a budget to the floor for amendment and debate and a vote.

I believe with all my heart that is one of the reasons why the American people hold the Congress in such low regard. It is because we have failed in our most basic responsibilities, now for more than 1,000 days. None of us can imagine a family or small business operating without a budget. It is unthinkable. I suspect there are not many, if any, small businesses that do not sit down and do the hard work of working out a budget. A budget, after all, is a matter of priorities. As the distinguished occupant of the chair knows as a former Governor, there is no way a State, a city, a county, a small business, or a family can get by without a

budget because it is the discipline that comes with a budget where you decide what is absolutely essential, you decide what you want to have that you maybe could put off for another day, and it forces you to reach the conclusion in some instances that things you would like to do are simply unaffordable. Unfortunately, the majority leader has simply resisted those hard decisions. That is regrettable.

As a member of the Budget Committee, I was especially disappointed that the Budget Committee, the very purpose of which is to debate and pass a budget, did not debate one this last year. The majority leader, when asked about this in the press, said that it would be foolish for the majority to produce a budget. I suspect he wanted to protect his Democratic Members from some tough votes and tough decisions. But that is what we were sent here for, to make hard but important decisions on behalf of our constituents and the American people, even if they are tough votes and even if they are unpopular decisions. That is our responsibility. But under the leadership of Senator REID the Senate has completely abdicated that responsibility for now 1,000 days.

Nothing could be more foolish or foolhardy than refusing to provide the Nation's job creators, investors, and, yes, the taxpayers, with a blueprint for our fiscal future. How is it that the majority can continue to shrink from the most basic responsibilities of governing? I am amazed sometimes. People say they want to serve in public office. They like the prestige, perhaps, the visibility, the power that goes along with it. Yet when it comes to actually discharging their responsibilities and making tough decisions, they may say, no, I don't want to make anybody mad.

But that is what we were sent here for. It is our responsibility. It is plain fact that the American people cannot afford to have this body continue paying just lip service to fiscal sanity while seeing our fiscal ship so off keel.

It should come as no surprise that during this period of time we have not had a budget for the Federal Government, the Nation has spent \$9.4 trillion. And \$4.1 trillion has been added to the national debt, if you account for the fact that the President recently asked for another \$1.2 trillion in additional borrowing authority. The national debt has grown to more than \$15 trillion and is now larger than the whole U.S. economy, our gross domestic product. Government spending has reached a post-World War II record and now makes up 25 percent of the economy. That is just government spending alone. The average has been somewhere around 20 percent of our gross domestic product. Now it is up to about 25 percent.

Unfortunately, because the economy is so depressed, revenues are around 15 percent, hence a 10-percent annual